



August 15th, 2015

Learn 30: Programming for Non-Programmers

Presented by Lorrin Garson

What is programming? How many programming languages are there? What are the most commonly used languages? What factors, other than writing code, are involved in programming? Why are so many programmers seemingly compulsive, emotional and pizza eaters? And what about those mysterious terms such as compiler, source code, object code, libraries, strings, floating point, metadata, IDE, OOP... ad nauseam? No, you won't learn how to program in 30 minutes but if the speaker does his job you will better understand what goes on in this strange world of astute humans and witless machines.



August 26, 2015 (Arlington)

Technology & PC Help Desk

Extended Question and Answer session; discuss topics of interest, share knowledge and get help with technology issues.

2015 Photo Contest



PATACS members are eligible to submit entries to the Association of Personal Computer User Group's (APCUG) 2015 Photo Contest. These contests are only open to APCUG-member groups. **Categories:** Animals, Architecture – urban design, cityscapes, & landmarks, People, Travel / Vacation – This category can include landscapes, nature images, urban landscapes and is descriptive of your trip. Please include your travel location.

The deadline for submissions is August 26. Visit this page to learn the basics, and follow the link therein for the contest guidelines:

<http://apcug2.org/2015-newsletter-photo-and-website-contests-begin-july-10-2015/>

While you're at the APCUG web site, be sure to visit the link for the (Live, In-Person!) Sept. conference in Las Vegas.

<http://apcug2.org/apcug-2015-las-vegas-conference/>

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Learning Lessons about Backups

by Gene Barlow

User Group Relations

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In the next couple of months, In the next couple of months, 55 years as a computer professional. I mention this to point out that even someone with extensive computer experience can make bad mistakes and crash their computer system. A few months ago, while sorting through the hundreds of emails I get every day, I opened an attached file I had received in an email from what I thought was my local Best Buy computer store. As soon as I clicked on the attachment, I realized I had just fallen for one of the worst upsets a hacker can do to your system. Opening this bogus attachment, unleashed a malware program on my computer which completely disabled my computer. All that was left was a window that stated that my computer had just been attacked by a bad virus and that I could pay \$59 to get a program that would remove this virus and fix my computer to how it was before. I knew that I was dealing with a hostage type of virus and if I had sent them the payment, I would have received nothing and they would now have my credit card information. I learned some valuable lessons from this bad situation that I want to share with you in this article.

Lesson 1 – Antimalware software does not protect your computer 100% of the time. I have installed on my computer some of the best antimalware software that constantly watches for malware that is attacking my computer. Knowing that any one antimalware product may not catch everything, I often run more than one antimalware product to get double protection. Still, even the best antimalware software cannot prevent dumb human errors, such as was my recent case. In fact,

you may be only 70 to 90% protected with good antimalware software. That means that you are exposed to bad things happening 10 to 30% of the time.

Lesson 2 – Antimalware software cannot correct the problems of a malware attack. While antimalware software is pretty good at catching malware getting on your system, it is totally useless at correcting the damage caused by a malware attack. Malware software attacks your computer in very different ways. There is no way to know what mischief a malware may make on your computer. So, once the bad stuff has gotten past your malware protection, you cannot rely on it to fix the damage caused. After my system was attacked, I ran all of the antimalware programs I had to try to correct the problems. Nothing worked in fixing things.

Lesson 3 – Only a good backup can fix the problems of a malware attack. Here I stress the word – Good. Most processes that go under the name of backup are not adequate to fix your computer after a malware attack. Internet or cloud backups are only partial backups of just a few of your data files. These limited backup approaches will not be able to correct the damage of a malware attack. Those that use Clone backups end up with only one clone backup. The risk is very high in the Clone backup approach that the single clone backup you have may not restore your computer damage. The only backup approach that will save you is a full system image backup to an external hard drive. Fortunately, I practice good backups

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and I was able to backup to prevent malware from making your restore my damaged system unusable when you need it most. Do not quickly attach the external drive to an infected computer; without boot directly off of “clean” media such as a backup utility recovery disk. For those who are technically inclined or without a backup when ransomware strikes, you may be able to recover files using the ransomware rescue kit described in the article at http://www.theregister.co.uk/2015/05/21/ransomware_rescue_kit/ and available at <https://bitbucket.org/jadacyrus/ransomwareremovalkit/overview>. You will need an uninfected computer to access this information.

Lesson 4 – Every user needs to regularly backup their computer

system. Without a frequent backup of your entire hard drive, you will not be protected from the next malware attack. This means an image backup using an excellent backup utility like Acronis True Image for PC or Mac is needed. Backing up the entire main hard drive on at least a weekly basis and storing this backup image on an external hard drive is the way to go. Save multiple weeks of backup to make sure you have more than one backup to rely on. Then you should be well protected the next time your malware system fails you. To order Acronis True Image 2015 for PC or Mac from us, go to www.ugr.com and select the product you wish to purchase. Once you are on that product’s page, click on the appropriate Buy Now button to place your order. We charge only \$25 for a single license or \$60 for a three license Family Pack. That is half this excellent product normally sells for from Acronis or from your retail computer store. When checking out of the shopping cart, enter in the special order code of UGNL0515. Not only do we provide the best prices for this excellent backup utility, we also give our customers much better support than they will get from Acronis or other distributors.

If you have questions about this article or the True Image for PC or Mac products, send an email to support@ugr.com and I will try to help you with your questions.

Editor’s Note: The particular type of malware that Gene describes is called ransomware and has become common. Always disconnect the external

backup to prevent malware from making your backup unusable when you need it most. Do not attach the external drive to an infected computer; boot directly off of “clean” media such as a backup utility recovery disk. For those who are technically inclined or without a backup when ransomware strikes, you may be able to recover files using the ransomware rescue kit described in the article at http://www.theregister.co.uk/2015/05/21/ransomware_rescue_kit/ and available at <https://bitbucket.org/jadacyrus/ransomwareremovalkit/overview>. You will need an uninfected computer to access this information.

Musings of an Apple Tyro

August 2015

Lorin R. Garson

A Beginning: During the past two years, my wife and I switched from Windows based PCs to Apple computers. At this time, we are rank beginners; rank as in someone with enthusiasm, but who has yet to gain any real skill in the area—hopefully not rank as in unpleasant, obnoxious or smelly. Writing from such a perspective has the advantage of being able to identify topics and issues relevant to those new to the Apple world. It has the disadvantage that reports and explanations can be naive, incomplete and at times downright wrong. So I crave your patience and understanding.

Serious Zero-Day Flaw in iOS and OS X:

Apple devices are noted for being relatively secure, but a zero-day threat has been detected that possibly (probably?) opens up Keychain, breaks app sandboxes and bypasses Apple’s App Store security checks. This puts Keychain and app passwords at risk so you may want to remove truly sensitive passwords from Keychain or stop using it altogether. Google has removed Keychain integration from its Chrome browser. At this time be particularly careful in downloading apps from unknown developers even from

Continued Page 4

iOS and Mac App Stores. Seemingly the flaws can only be exploited by apps that make it into Apple's App Stores, which provides a firewall of sorts.

Thanks to Geof Goodrum for bringing attention to this quandary. Hopefully by the time you read this Apple will have resolved the threat.

References:

See <http://bit.ly/1BwEPeV> from Macworld "Zero-day exploit lets App Store malware steal OS X and iOS passwords".

See <http://bit.ly/1BwFcGI> from 9to5Mac "Major zero-day security flaws in iOS & OS X allow theft of both Keychain and app passwords".

See <http://bit.ly/1H8vEng> from The Register

"Apple CORE: Boffins reveal password-killer 0-days for iOS and OS X".

OS X 10.11 (El Capitan) Coming:

At the recent June Apple Worldwide Developers Conference (commonly referred to as the WWDC), it was announced that the next version of the Apple operating system, OS X 10.11, will be coming this fall. It will be free through the Mac App Store. This release is to be called "El Capitan", which is a famous vertical rock formation in Yosemite National Park. The current OS X version is named "Yosemite", so just from the name "El Capitan" we can reasonably expect enhancements and fixes rather than revolutionary change. The major changes we can look forward to are:

Improved overall performance.

Split view for side-by-side display of two application windows. This is a feature long available in Microsoft Windows.

Improved Spotlight with "search anywhere" functionality. Spotlight will also be improved to look up sporting event tickets, weather and upcoming events. Natural language speech input will be available, for example [give me] "Documents I worked on last week"

Enriched Mail functions. Swiping right and left on a trackpad to trash messages or marked them as unread. New tabs to populate the address book (Contacts) and Calendar.

Improvement in Notes to include headers, paragraph styles, bold and italicized text and attached photos.

Safari will include "pin sites" for easy access, mute playing audio and stream content to AirPlay devices.

Maps will include a "Transit" view that displays transit lines in certain cities (bus, train and subway routes). Step-by-step instructions for getting from point A to point B.

Windows management will be improved to automatically split screens between applications and store multiple desktop layouts in the navigation bar.

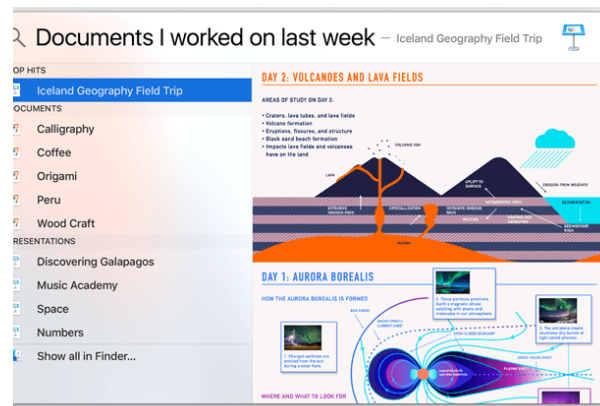
A new systemwide font called "San Francisco".

References:

See <http://bit.ly/1GCzPV0> from MacRumors "OS X El Capitan"

See <http://bit.ly/1BwZEa6> from 9to5Mac, "Two weeks with iOS 9 and El Capitan: Which new features stand out and which ones fall short".

See <http://apple.co/1JeaJ5> from Apple, "OS X El Capitan".



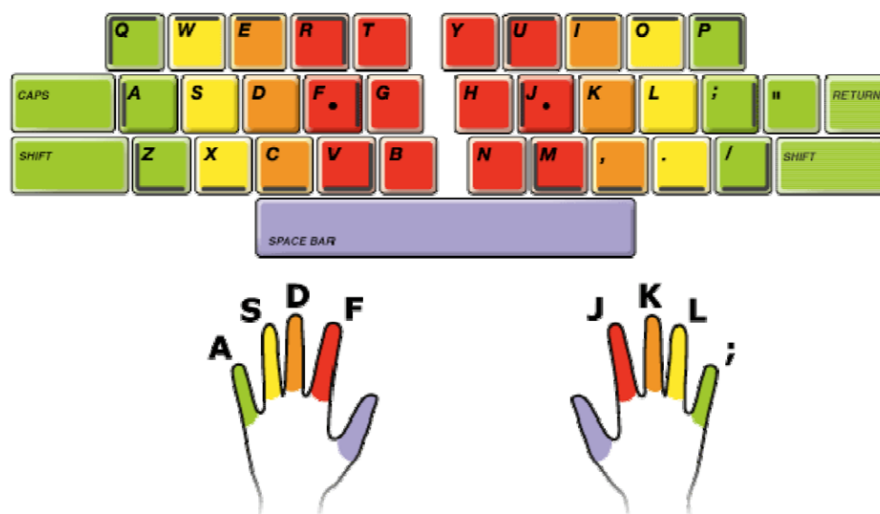
Continued Page 5

Keyboard Shortcuts:

There are many keyboard shortcuts available for Apple computers, the use of which can significantly increase productivity. In the Table 1 below are six commonly used Finder shortcuts.

Table 1: Six Common Finder Shortcuts

Function	Keyboard Sequence	Comments
Logout	CMD+Shift+Q	Click on “Log Out” or wait 60 seconds to log out
Display Documents	CMD+Shift+O	Displays the Documents folder/directory
Invoke Spotlight	CMD+Spacebar	Invokes the input screen to search for objects
Delete an object	CMD+Delete	Removes a highlighted file or folder (object) to the trash can
Create a new folder	CMD+Shift+N	Creates a new “untitled folder” in the current location
Park object in the Dock	CMD+M	Park current object (file, folder) in the Doc



Help Wanted: Meeting Speakers

Finding presenters for our meeting programs is difficult—you help in the effort to enhance the value we all receive from PATACS membership would be greatly appreciated! Please consider speaking to your friends at an Arlington or Fairfax meeting. We’d love to feature your take on a smart phone or tablet app. A presentation on these or other topics of interest to or other topics of interest to you would undoubtedly be welcomed by your PATACS colleagues. We have space in our schedule for 15, 30, 60 and 75 minute discussions—what are you waiting for?

We also have ready-made paragraphs you could use in e-mail communications to help us find speakers. Contact: [director2\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director2@patacs.org)



Web Sites for Historical Markers

by Geof Goodrum

Director, *Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society*

Director1(at)patacs.org

Many times I've driven past highway historical markers that I wanted to read but did not have sufficient time nor space to pull over. I figured marker information must be available on-line, but procrastinated until recently.

As I live in Virginia and was most interested in markers along roads to Shenandoah National Park, the first web site that I found was the Virginia Historical Highway Markers site hosted by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources at http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/hiway_markers/hwmarker_info.htm. Virginia claims the oldest program of historical highway markers, beginning in 1927 along US Route 1. The site features a Marker Online Database Search by keyword, Zip Code, county/city, route or marker number, as well as a zoomable map view. The database includes a photo and text transcription of each marker. The database search results can also be exported in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format.

The Maryland Historical Trust hosts a similar web site for Maryland at <http://mht.maryland.gov/historicalmarkers/>, with searches by keyword, town, theme (e.g., French and Indian War) or by county map.

However, perhaps a more useful site is the Historical Marker Database at <http://www.hmdb.org/>. HMdb not only includes highway markers across the US, but building plaques and other markers of interest, as well. HMdb search options include keywords, postal code, proximity to post office, a broad variety of categories, by town/city/place, by road/street name, and marker title or number. HMdb provides GPX

file download for GPS device navigation to markers, supports display of marker locations on maps to network-enabled mobile devices, and provides data to Google Niantic Lab's Field Trip app available on Google Play and Apple's App Store (<http://www.fieldtripper.com/>). I installed this app on my Google Nexus 5 for a future review).

While not directly tied to highway markers, I recommend checking out the web site for The Center for Land Use Interpretation at <http://clui.org/>. This site also hosts a Land Use Database of locations in the US that have special significance, but are sometimes overlooked. This database includes a Google Maps-based interface as well as a text and browse by state search.

Linux and Open Source News

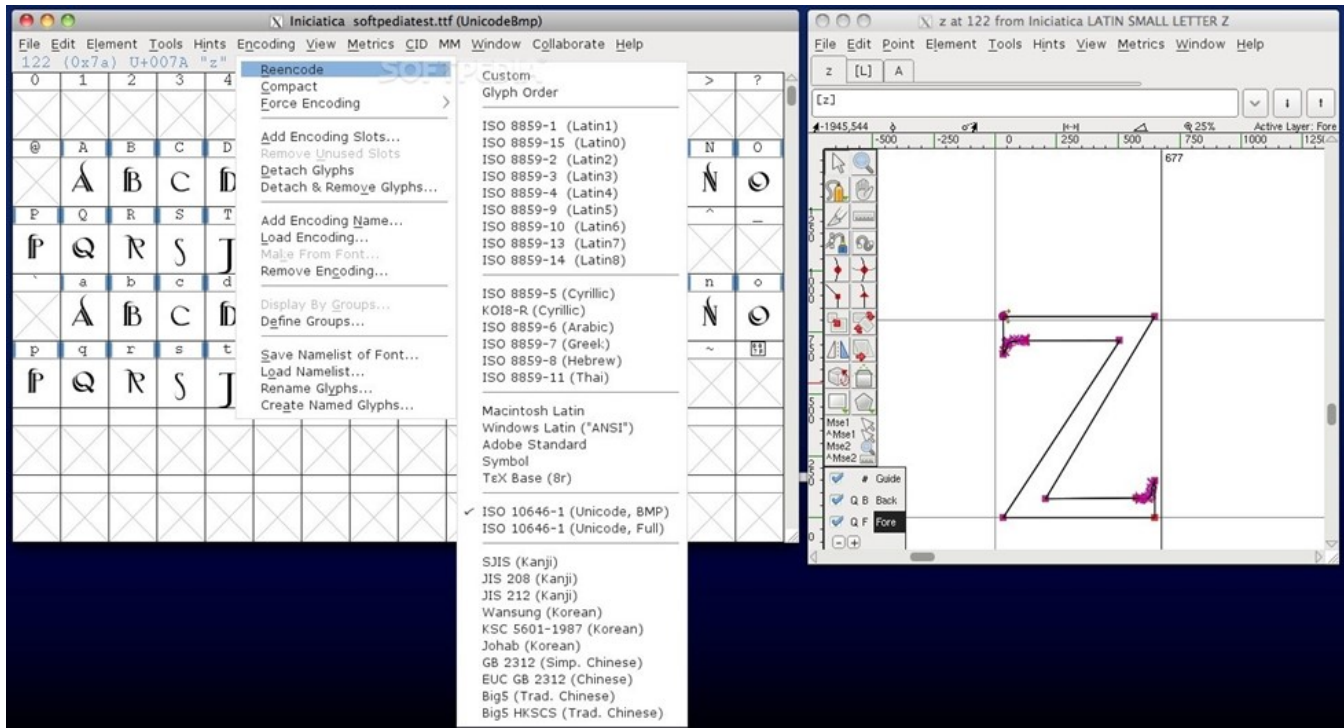
by Geof Goodrum

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FontForge – v20150612. <https://fontforge.github.io/en-US/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by George Williams and FontForge Project contributors. FontForge is an outline font editor that lets you create your own Postscript, TrueType, OpenType, CID-keyed, multi-master, CFF, SVG, and bitmap (BDF) fonts, or edit existing ones. It also lets you convert one format to another, and has support for many Macintosh font formats. (See page 7 for graphic.)

Kernel Source – v4.1.1. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code for GNU/Linux® by Linus Torvalds et al.

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FontForge—Above

SDL-Sopwith

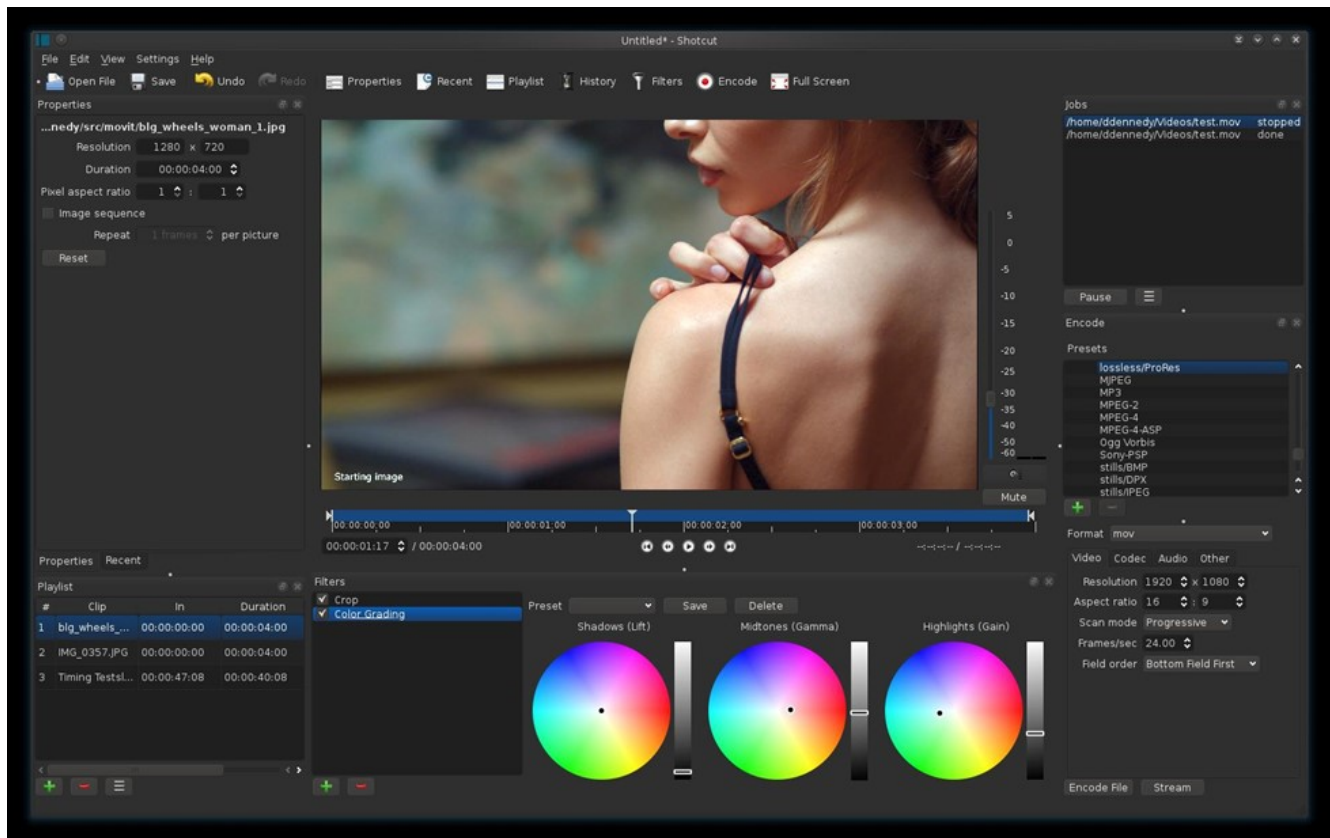
SDL-Sopwith – v1.8.4. <http://sdl-sopwith.sourceforge.net/index.shtml>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for any platform supporting libSDL, including Microsoft® Windows® and GNU/Linux® by Simon Howard and Jesse Smith. This is a port of the classic MS-DOS computer game “Sopwith” to run on modern computers and operating systems. It is named SDL Sopwith as it was originally based only on the LibSDL graphics library. While the game remains much the same as it did twenty years ago, small changes and optional features have been added to give the player more flexibility and challenges, including:

- Modern native application will run under Windows, GNU/Linux, FreeBSD, BeOS and probably most modern operating systems supported by LibSDL
- Working sound (emulated PC speaker through the sound card)

- Working Multiplayer
- More configurable than the original (options from Sopwith 2/ The authors edition can be turned off)
- Vastly cleaned up and portable code



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ShotCut – v15.07. <http://www.shotcut.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Dan Dennedy. Shotcut is a cross-platform video editing application that supports a wide variety of audio, image and video formats. It uses a timeline for non-linear video editing of multiple tracks that may be in different formats. New features in this release include:

4K UHD support

5 new video filters:

Old Film: Dust

Old Film: Grain

Old Film: Projector

Old Film: Scratches

Old Film: Technocolor

5 new audio filters:

Bass & Treble (3-band graphic equalizer)

Band Pass

High Pass

Low Pass

Notch

Added Insert Track and Remove Track

New default Encode settings produce a better quality H.264 MP4 file

Composite now defaults to on/enabled for new video tracks

LibreOffice 4.4

By Cal Esneault,
Former President of CCCC;
leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs

April 2015 issue, CCCC Computer News
Newsletter (at) clickers.org
www.clickers.org

After Oracle acquired the rights to *OpenOffice.org*, open-source developers forked it to *LibreOffice* in 2011. Although many code improvements were made, the user interface remained fairly constant. In the recent release of the ninth major version, *LibreOffice* 4.4, however, the toolbars for the user interface were significantly rearranged and a variety of new icon themes were included. Below I compare the default "Human" theme from version 4.2 to a few of the new themes from version 4.4 (these are partial views of the Standard and Formatting toolbars from the *LibreOffice Writer* word processor). Note: themes for 4.4 included and available from the *Options* menu under View).

While *LibreOffice* has always had the capability to read/write *Microsoft Office* file formats, the cross-compatibility is not exact and usually requires some manual readjustment. One key factor is that *Microsoft* fonts are proprietary and can't be used unless you are using the Windows operating system. To minimize issues, *LibreOffice* used defaults of Liberation and Liberation Sans, fonts which corresponded well to the overall size of the MS fonts Times New Roman and Arial (default fonts for *MS Office* 1997 - 2003). Starting with *MS Office* 2007, *MS Office* switched defaults to new fonts -- Cambria and Calibri. To address its own interpretation issues, Google sponsored development of new fonts, Caladea and Carlito, that matched the footprints of the new *MS Office* fonts. Below are examples of the newer fonts for *MS Office* and *LibreOffice*.

Caladea font from LibreOffice 4.4
Cambria font from MS Office
Carlito font from LibreOffice 4.4
Calibri from MS Office

If you are running a *Linux OS*, you can make *LibreOffice* automatically replace the *MS Fonts* with the new open-source fonts (under *Options*, go to *Fonts*, and define substitution rules -- for example, Calibri → Carlito). This works well for reading the document, but have an original copy with the *Microsoft* font designations if you edit it and have to send it back to *MS Office* software.

The above are just two examples of what is a very polished release of *LibreOffice*. If you need the

Human (LibreOffice 4.2 default)



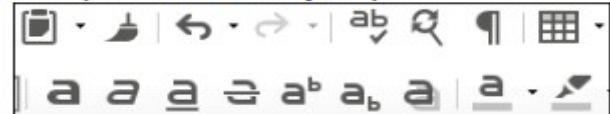
Tango (LibreOffice 4.4 default):



Galaxy (LibreOffice 4.4 option):



Sifer (LibreOffice 4.4 option):



Oxygen (LibreOffice 4.4 option):



new version and are a user of long-term support releases of an *Ubuntu* flavor or a distro based on the *Ubuntu* code base (such as *Linux Mint*), you will have to use your search engine to find the appropriate PPA archive and add it your source list for repositories.

If you run *LibreOffice* under a *Windows OS*, I suggest you remove the current version of *LibreOffice*, download the new *Windows* compatible files from the *LibreOffice* site, and then do a fresh install of the suite to avoid conflicts.

Free Apps That Can Save or Make You Money by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.cyberguy.com/appearances/5-apps-that-can-help-you-earn-extra-money/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ebates>

<http://www.ebates.com>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.getmabee>

<http://www.getmabee.com/mabeeapp>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.buystopia.snap>

<https://snap.groupon.com>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ibotta.android>

<https://ibotta.com>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.whaleshark.retailmenot>

<http://www.retailmenot.com>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.infoscout.receipthog>

<http://receipthog.com>

On one of the morning talk shows earlier this week, a guest was "Kurt the Cyber Guy", also known as Kurt Knutsson. His topic was "5 Apps That Can Help You Earn Extra Money". All of the apps that he mentioned were free, and available for both Android and iOS devices. A few of the apps that he mentioned, I was already familiar with, and already using some competitive apps that in my opinion were equal to or better than those that he was showing on TV. Basically the apps that he referenced offered digital coupons, automatic digital rebates, and even the opportunity for the user to earn money as an automated "secret shopper" for several local stores.

While many local stores, such as Kohl's, Macy's, and Kroger have their own proprietary apps which offer sales information and digital coupons that can be scanned or otherwise digitally applied at checkout, other apps aggregate the coupons and sales of hundreds of stores in a single app. My personal favorite coupon app which I have been

using for a while is RetailMeNot, available as a webpage at retailmenot.com, or as a free download as an app directly from the Google and Apple app stores. At any given time, RetailMeNot claims to have over a half-million coupons available from over 50,000 stores! Many of these coupons are intended to be used for online purchases, applied at the "enter coupon code here" box at checkout for online purchases, while many other coupons are digital in nature, often in bar-code format, which can be scanned at the register at checkout.

On Father's Day, at one of the local well known restaurants, my extended family used a "20% Off" coupon, saving us a tidy sum off of a sizeable check. A few days earlier, at one of the local "national chain" soft goods stores, again with the RetailMeNot app, we used another 20% coupon at the checkout, which the clerk simply scanned from the screen on my phone. As do most of the competitive coupon apps, Re-

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RetailMeNot can use the location feature of the device and display an interactive map showing the local businesses that currently have coupons or sales listed on the app.

Many people are aware that many manufacturers and retailers offer rebates on individual item purchases, but those sellers know that only a small percentage of purchasers actually send in the rebate coupons. Likewise, many manufacturers and retailers offer "cents off" or similar coupons for merchandise in their respective stores, and except for a small handful of "ultimate couponers" most of us are blissfully unaware of those coupons, or otherwise do not take the time and effort to clip them, sort them, and hand them to the checker; in terms of courtesy, the customers in line behind us may be irritated with the extra time it takes for the checker to process large numbers of paper coupons. While stores such as Kroger have heavily gone to digital coupons, which they call "E-Coupons", there are many more coupons available for use in the grocery stores and other retailers that we can possibly be aware of, thus losing the benefit and savings that those unknown coupons could have otherwise provided us. Now, there are several free apps available that automate the coupon task without having the checker scan individual paper or digital coupons, and the coupons can also be leisurely processed after returning home by simply using the phone's camera to take a picture of the receipt. The app's host server will use sophisticated OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to read the receipt, searching for a coupon for each of the identified items, and crediting any found coupons to the user. At specified intervals or amounts, the app will automatically transfer the coupon proceeds to the user as a PayPal deposit, prepaid gift card, or other specified form of payment. that we can possibly be aware of, thus losing the benefit and savings that those unknown coupons could have otherwise provided us. Now, there are several free apps available that automate the coupon task without having the checker scan individual paper or digital coupons, and the coupons can also be leisurely processed after returning home by simply using the phone's camera to take a picture of the receipt. The app's host server will use sophisticated OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to read

receipt, searching for a coupon for each of the identified items, and crediting any found coupons to the user. At specified intervals or amounts, the app will automatically transfer the coupon proceeds to the user as a PayPal deposit, prepaid gift card, or other specified form of payment.

Some of the apps that can scan register receipts and remotely process coupons are "Snap by Groupon", IBotta, and Receipt Hog; each of these apps are available for Android and iOS. While all of these apps work somewhat similarly, there are some differences between them. As I write this column, "Snap by Groupon" (snap.groupon.com) is showing 37 current items that are offering significant cash back for the purchase of any of those items; these items, most of which each offer a rebate between \$1 and \$3, include coffee, baby food, fiber supplements, greeting cards, ground beef, hair care products, almonds, magazines, breakfast cereal, soups, and many other grocery products. If any of these items appear in the photo of a grocery receipt, Snap by Groupon will deposit the proceeds into the selected account. Another similar automated rebate service is IBotta (ibotta.com) which has an extensive list of individual products which will generate significant rebates, as well as a sizeable list of retailers who offer larger rebates (many \$10 or more) for shopping in those stores, both local and online. IBotta will deposit rebate proceeds into a PayPal account, or as prepaid gift cards good at a wide selection of retailers. A third competitive rebate app is from Receipt Hog (receipthog.com), which in addition to processing rebates from photos of receipts, also offers contests and games based on purchases which award additional points; Receipt Hog pays the proceeds into the user's PayPal account or as prepaid Amazon gift cards.

A heavily advertised rebate or "cash back" service available online or as an app is Ebates (ebates.com), which primarily offers rebates and coupons for online purchases; these rebates can be for a specific number of dollars, or a percentage of the total order, ranging from 1% to 40%. Periodically, some of the participating retailers offer "double rebates", which can greatly in-

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increase the rewards given to the users. According to the Ebates website, "You get Cash Back at over 1,800 stores every time you start your shopping trip at Ebates. There are no points to redeem, no forms to mail in and no fees. Stores pay Ebates a commission for sending you their way, and Ebates shares the commission with you as Cash Back." That same website says that the total real time rebates already paid to Ebates users is currently \$338 million. Ebates also offers a variety of incentives to join, typically a \$10 gift card to any one of a variety of popular stores, sent to the member after a minimal amount of purchases.

Many of you readers are likely aware that there are several legitimate (and some not so legitimate) "mystery shopper" services, that pay individuals to visit particular stores, maybe to make a small purchase, and then send an evaluation of the store and the employees. For those who would like to earn some money while shopping by performing mystery shopping services, using the app from Mobee (getmobee.com/mobeeapp) can totally automate the process. The results of the mystery shop can be sent directly from the phone, earning points which can be converted to cash or to gift cards for

stores of the user's choice. A typical successful mystery shop awards points worth \$5 or more.

According to Mobee, "Earn huge rewards and tons of cash to go to places you already know and love! Mobee is the easiest way to make money while helping local businesses improve their service! We connect you to thousands of businesses near you that want to hear your feedback on their stores, and in return you get rewarded with awesome prizes, gifts, and cash. ... With locations like Starbucks, McDonalds, CVS and more, chances are you'll find a place to earn cash and enjoy doing it!" The Mobee app can generate a local map displaying those businesses participating in the program; selecting a business will describe the mystery shop duties, and the compensation for the project.

Since most of us carry a smart phone with us while we shop, we might as well use that smart phone to save us money, or even make us money while we shop. Wouldn't it be great to convert our expensive smart phones from an expense to a profitable revenue source? Something to think about.

More Sources of Free and Deeply Discounted Software and Apps

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://sharewareonsale.com>

<http://hungryforapps.com>

<http://www.bitsdujour.com>

<http://appgratis.com>

<http://www.giveawayoftheday.com>

As happens a few times each year, earlier today I was the guest speaker for the local computer club. Before my presentation, one of the leaders of the computer club was answering some questions from a few of those present, and his answers led to one of the several websites that I visit daily to find the latest deals in software. The website that he finished with, and the same website that I started with, was Ashraf's ShareWareOnSale.com. to find the latest deals in software. The website that he finished with, and the same website that I started with, was Ashraf's ShareWareOnSale.com.

to find the latest deals in software. The website that he finished with, and the same website that I started with, was Ashraf's ShareWareOnSale.com.

Old time personal computer users, even going back to the TRS-80, VIC 20, and Commodore 64 days, may recognize the terms "shareware" to mean software that was intended by its authors to be free copied and "shared" with others. The old, now long defunct, Commodore Computer Club had cartons full of 5.25" floppy disks, each con-

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-taining a particular shareware program, which we busily copied during the meetings. In the early days of the local PC club, which is still bustling, the software library containing thousands of shareware floppies was the most popular attraction of the club. Members could copy whatever they wanted, or purchase copies already on floppies for a nominal fee. When the earliest CDs came on the market, we started trading CDs, as one CD could hold the contents of hundreds of the old floppies, and entire software libraries could be burned onto a single CD. Getting a new CD every few months with the latest updates and new software was the highlight of many of the club meetings. That is where and when the concept of "shareware" blossomed. While shareware still exists, it is no longer traded as it was in the past, because with the universal spread of the internet there is an abundance of software available for free download from countless online sources.

While its name may be slightly misleading, one of the first emails that I open every morning is from ShareWareOnSale.com. I choose to get the once daily email from them, and then check the website if any of their offerings are of interest to me. Rather than the classical shareware readily available elsewhere, ShareWareOnSale.com offers legitimate, complete, fully functional, licensed copies of commercial (paid) software either for free, or at a deeply discounted price. The apparent marketing concept behind this is that the free versions of the paid software often does not allow any updates or upgrades (with some notable exceptions), and often offered adjacent to the free version is the fully supported and upgradeable versions of the paid software at deeply discounted prices. By downloading and using the free version, the publisher hopes that the user will like it and eventually pay the fee for the upgradeable version of the same software.

The offerings at ShareWareOnSale.com are dynamic, in that they are frequently changing, as the software offered is only available for a limited time, and other titles take their place on the listings. ShareWareOnSale.com offers software for Windows (7, 8.1, and 10), and Mac computers. A companion website, HungryForApps.com offers similar deals on apps for Android, iOS phones, iPads, Windows, and Mac powered devices. As I

type this, the leading offers on ShareWareOnSale.com for Windows PCs include a comprehensive encryption utility, CyberSafe Top Secret Ultimate, which retails for \$95.90 for free without any future upgrades, or the exact same software with a lifetime license including free upgrades at a 75% discount, or \$23.97. A very popular and competent comprehensive PC cleaner and management utility that may significantly improve PC performance, Wise Cleaner 365 PRO is available as a free download, or the same software is available with a lifetime license for three PCs, including all future updates and upgrades at a 70% discount off the direct sales price of \$76, or \$22.80, after the discount. A 6 month license, including all updates and upgrades for Avast Internet Security 2015, normally \$19.99 is available for free; it is obvious that Avast hopes that the user likes the program, and will renew the license at the then offered price. A one year license, including all updates and upgrades for the AVG AntiVirus 2015, normally \$39.95, is available for free for a limited time. A few dozen other Windows programs, including system optimizers, photo editors, instructional e-books and training lessons, media utilities, and other types of Windows software are also listed for free or deeply discounted. People interested in receiving a once a day "no spam" email listing the latest offering can sign up on the website for the service.

The companion site, which coordinates its offerings with ShareWareOnSale.com is the "app" site offering apps for iPhone, iPad, Android devices, Windows 8.1, and Windows 10 apps is HungryForApps.com. As the sister site, these apps are normally paid apps, but are offered for a limited time for free or deeply discounted. The offered Android apps are all available for direct download and installation from the reputable sources such as the Google Play Store or the Amazon Android App Store. At any given time, hundreds of Android apps are available, with the listings available sorted by price, store (Amazon or Google), quality ratings (1 to 5 stars), and category, with "ALL" showing everything also being an option. The "category" menu is comprehensive, with user selectable listings of Games, "Books & Comics & Reference", Business, Entertainment, Finance, Kids & Education, "Medical & Health & Fitness & Cooking", News & Magazines, Shopping &


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While ShareWareOnSale.com and HungryForApps.com are among the most comprehensive of the daily updated websites offering software "deals" available for only a limited time, they are not the only sources of similar software deals. With daily email notifications or website access, other sources of deeply discounted or free commercial software are Bitsdujour.com, AppGratis.com, and GiveAwayOfTheDay.com. On a typical day, Bitsdujour.com offers about a dozen deeply discounted commercial software titles, and an occasional commercial product is available for free. Unlike the other sources, AppGratis and GiveAwayOfTheDay.com typically only offer one, and occasionally two, software titles a day. As is common for these deal sites, the offerings are only available for a limited time. The GiveAwayOfTheDay.com offering is always free, and AppGratis.com always offers at least one free app, and sometimes a second deeply discounted app. One especially nice feature of the GiveAwayOfTheDay.com is the ratings and evaluation given to the day's offerings, often by dozens of users who have already downloaded the daily offering. While most of the offerings have generally high ratings and reviews, there are also some offerings that have relatively low ratings, and as a

matter of personal policy I will not download and install any of the poorly rated offerings.

Between these five resources for commercial software, on any given day, hundreds of commercial software products are available for immediate download. My preference is to subscribe to the once daily email for each of the five, having specified the operating systems that I have, and the new offerings for that day. AppGratis offers an optional service that displays a notification of that day's offerings on my Android phone every morning. With these five resources, anyone who likes software and apps for Windows, Mac, Android, iPhone, and iPad will likely find products of interest.

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